



**STATE OF VERMONT
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
115 STATE STREET
MONTPELIER, VT
05633-5301**

May 16, 2022

Commissioner Emily Hawes
Department of Mental Health
280 State Drive
Waterbury, VT 05671

Dear Commissioner Hawes,

The House Committee on Health Care (Committee) is appreciative of the data that has been provided by the Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems, in collaboration with the Department of Mental Health (Department), over the past year regarding emergency department wait times for those experiencing a mental health crisis.

Given the continued crisis in the mental health system and the new developments by the University of Vermont Health Network to discontinue planning for both the Central Vermont Medical Center inpatient unit and the University of Vermont Medical Center's children's unit, the Committee remains extremely concerned about the wait times for individuals in crisis. Consequently, the Committee requests that these reports be maintained and that the Department resume monthly reports providing updates on initiatives addressing these needs in order to keep the Committee informed of the Department's action steps to address this crisis through the end of the calendar year.

The Committee also asks that these reports include any interim information or steps by the Department related to the issues identified in the fiscal year 2023 budget for a January 2023 report regarding patient experience of care in emergency rooms (for example, Sec. E.314.1, "progress of the health care system in improving the patient experience of care for individuals encountering lengthy emergency department] waits for admission for inpatient psychiatric treatment.... [including assessment of the services offered to these patients in emergency departments and the extent to which stakeholder input is included in decisions about services and patient care.]")

The Committee appreciates the Department for its commitment to addressing this crisis.

Sincerely,

Rep. William J. Lippert Jr., Chair
on behalf of the House Committee on Health Care